

SPONSOR'S  
VIEW:

Sen. Farabee said the bill contained safeguards to protect the board's discretion in granting paroles. Since the board would not have been required to release an inmate during his or her tentative parole month and since no prisoners could have been released before the initial parole-eligibility date set under current law, the bill would not have caused inmates to be released sooner than they can be now. The bill would merely have accelerated the administrative process for parole evaluation. Sen. Farabee told the Houston Chronicle, "I think it was one of the few measures that passed the Legislature to deal with the problems of prison overcrowding."

NOTES: The House Study Group analysis of SB 518 appeared in the May 17 Daily Floor Report.

Taxation of public coliseums  
(SB 737 by McFarland)

DIGEST: The Tax Code currently exempts from property taxation a long-term lease by a private party of a part of a public park, market, fairground or similar public facility owned by a city or town. This bill would have extended the exemption to long-term private leases of all of such a facility, and added coliseums to the list of public facilities affected by this provision.

GOVERNOR'S  
REASONS  
FOR VETO:

The bill would have permitted leaseholders of most of the major sports coliseums in Texas to avoid paying their fair share of ad valorem taxes, the Governor said. He said leaseholders of public properties "should pay their fair share toward financing governmental activities in their area, especially when they operate these facilities on a for-profit basis and receive benefits from the taxing entities involved."

SPONSOR'S  
VIEW:

Sen. McFarland said that the Governor thought the bill would have benefited "Bum" Bright, owner of the Dallas Cowboys, and Eddie Chiles, owner of the Texas Rangers, so "he vetoed it for political reasons." McFarland said that the intent of the bill was to correct the Tax Code to reflect current practice. Most professional sports teams that hold long-term leases on public coliseums in fact leave one seat unleased, so

that they will fall within the provision exempting lessors of only part of a public facility. The bill would have removed the technical cause of this subterfuge, without changing the exemption already extended to the sports teams, he said.

Manufacture of gambling machines for out-of-state sale  
(SB 765 by Harris)

DIGEST: Under Tex. Penal Code sec. 47.06, it is a third-degree felony to manufacture in Texas any device designed for gambling. SB 765 would have legalized the in-state manufacture or sale of gambling devices if they were to be shipped out of state to a place where their use is legal.

GOVERNOR'S  
REASONS  
FOR VETO:

The Governor said enactment of SB 765 would "set a bad precedent and would be bad public policy in our state where the use of such machines is illegal."

SPONSOR'S  
VIEW:

"It's dumb," Sen. Harris said of Gov. White's veto. The bill, he said, would have provided an affirmative defense for the lottery-machine manufacturer near Dallas who was recently no-billed by a grand jury on charges of manufacturing gambling devices. With this veto, the manufacturer, who employs 225 people directly and accounts for more jobs indirectly, remains open to indictment. "A lot of people called him and said, 'Come to our state; we won't indict you,'" Harris said. "He's already moving part of his operation to Michigan. That's 50 to 100 jobs we're losing right there."

NOTES:

The House Study Group analysis of SB 765 appeared in the May 22 Daily Floor Report.

Municipal regulation of taxicabs  
(SB 1081 by Whitmire)

DIGEST: The bill would have authorized municipalities to license and regulate taxicabs, their rates and insurance. Regulation could also have controlled taxicab services' entry into business in a particular municipality.